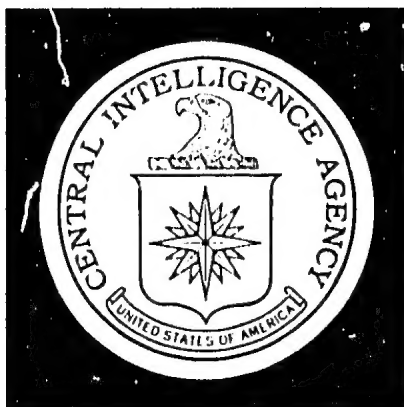


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Malawi: Pawn of White Southern Africa?

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Malawi: Pawn of White Southern Africa?

My first duty is toward my own people. If, in order to look after my people, I have to deal with the devil, I will do so.

President Hastings Banda

Geographic location and economic imperatives have largely determined Malawi's relations with its neighbors in southern Africa. Impoverished and landlocked, Malawi is dependent on white-ruled Portuguese Mozambique for rail outlets to the Indian Ocean. Rhodesia and South Africa provide employment for Malawi's large surplus of manpower and are also important contributors of foreign exchange. Moreover, South Africa has become an increasingly significant source of development capital for projects that Malawi has been unable to finance elsewhere.

President Banda's policy of open cooperation with the white states* has earned him the title "Odd Man Out" in Africa. Malawi is the only black African state that has official relations with South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia. The President's outspoken defense of his ties with these "racist regimes" has resulted in his isolation from other black African leaders and has strained Malawi's relations with most black states. Banda, however, sweeps aside all criticism, arguing that dialogue will bring about change where violent confrontation has failed.

Banda: The Architect of Malawi

25X6 A politician of consummate skill, President Hastings Kamuzu Banda has a deceptively mild appearance

He enjoys enormous prestige within his country as the man who took the former British dependency of Nyasaland out of the unpopular Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and to independence as Malawi. Ironically, Banda at that time was considered a strong spokesman for African nationalism. Dr. Banda had led an unsuccessful

campaign in London from 1951-53 to keep Nyasaland out of the proposed federation, fearing domination by Southern Rhodesia. In July 1958, Banda returned home to a tumultuous welcome and assumed the leadership of the Nyasaland independence movement.



President Banda

*The white-ruled governments of southern Africa include the Republic of South Africa, South-West Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese African territories of Angola and Mozambique.

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Banda was named prime minister when the colony achieved internal self-government in 1963, and one year later he became president of the independent state of Malawi. Since independence, Banda has completely dominated Malawi, relying primarily on British expatriates to keep the civil service, army, and police effective and loyal. Through a mixture of paternalism and force, Banda maintains firm control of the government machinery and of the only legal political party; he makes all major and many minor decisions. Because of this dominance he has unfettered authority to push ahead with Malawi's policy of cooperation with the white governments of southern Africa. This policy has generated some opposition among the few educated Malawians,

only because of the economic benefits but also because of his wish to be a "bridge-builder" between the races of Africa.

Malawi's Economic and Geographic Imperatives

In addition to his personal convictions, the pragmatic Banda realizes he must deal with white Africa because of Malawi's economic weakness. With few exploitable natural resources and with 90 percent of its 4.5-million people engaged in agriculture, the country is one of the poorest and most densely populated states in Africa. Its manpower surplus is manageable only because Rhodesia and South Africa annually employ approximately 255,000 Malawians, nearly twice the number of Malawian wage earners at home.

Malawi's foreign policy toward the white redoubt reflects Banda's own philosophy on how to cope with the racial problems of southern Africa. He is convinced that his approach is more realistic than the strategy of "boycott, isolation, and violent confrontation" espoused—at least verbally—by many black African states. While Banda opposes all forms of racial discrimination, he also believes that violence will only aggravate what he considers its root cause—the white man's fear of the black majority. Instead, Banda argues that through contacts and dialogue, black and white leaders can gradually develop respect for each other, thereby paving the way for peaceful and evolutionary change. He admits that eradication of black-white hostilities is an exceedingly difficult and distant objective and that his approach may take several generations to achieve. Nevertheless, Banda is convinced that the alternative black African solution, relying on the use of force, has even less chance of success.

Malawi thus is the only African state that has full diplomatic relations with South Africa, consular relations with Portuguese Mozambique as well as a nonresident ambassador to Lisbon, and a government representative in Rhodesia. President Banda has welcomed these relations not

Malawi also occupies a strategic position between Zambia and Tanzania—the two most active supporters of African liberation movements—and white-ruled Mozambique. Should Malawi become a major infiltration route for African militants, it would complicate the insurgency problem for the Portuguese in Mozambique and in turn cause difficulties for Rhodesia and South Africa. Conversely, denial of the use of Malawian territory to the guerrillas would make it even more difficult for them to operate effectively. The white governments accordingly have attempted to cultivate Malawi as a means of restraining it from granting black African insurgents a base of operations. 25X6

South Africa: Moving Outward via Malawi

South African Prime Minister Vorster's official visit to Malawi last May was a victory for Banda and a high point in relations between the two countries. President Banda touted the presence of the apartheid leader as vindication of his policies and expressed the hope that it would result in even closer relations.

As for South Africa, the state visit confirmed Vorster's intention to proceed with his "outward policy" of establishing friendly relations with neighboring black African states.

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Although this policy has not yet gotten much beyond Malawi, Pretoria hopes it will eventually improve South Africa's image in the West, defuse black African hostility, and win acceptance of the status quo in white-ruled Africa.

In addition to these political contacts, over the past three years there has been a significant increase in Malawi's economic ties with South Africa concurrently with a decline in assistance from the UK—still Malawi's main benefactor—and from other Western sources. The lack of competition from other Western nations and Banda's unswerving opposition to accepting aid from Communist states have given South Africa the opportunity to fill the aid vacuum.

President Banda has been especially appreciative of South African assistance for two of his pet goals. The first project, announced in 1968, involved two loans totaling \$15.4 million

(Banda Reassures Vorster on Critics in South Africa)



"Some of my best friends are White!"



President Banda and Prime Minister Vorster exchange views

for rolling stock and construction of the Malawi portion of a rail link leading to the Mozambican seaport of Nacala. The same year, Banda also obtained an \$11.2 million loan for construction of the first phase of a new national capital at Lilongwe. Both of these projects had been rejected by traditional Western aid sources as unnecessary. The still largely uncompleted capital, which may cost more than \$50 million to finish, may enable South Africa to increase its political leverage on Banda because Pretoria is the only likely source of additional aid. These projects will give Malawi few immediate economic returns, but Banda insists they are necessary for his country's long-range growth and its balanced development.

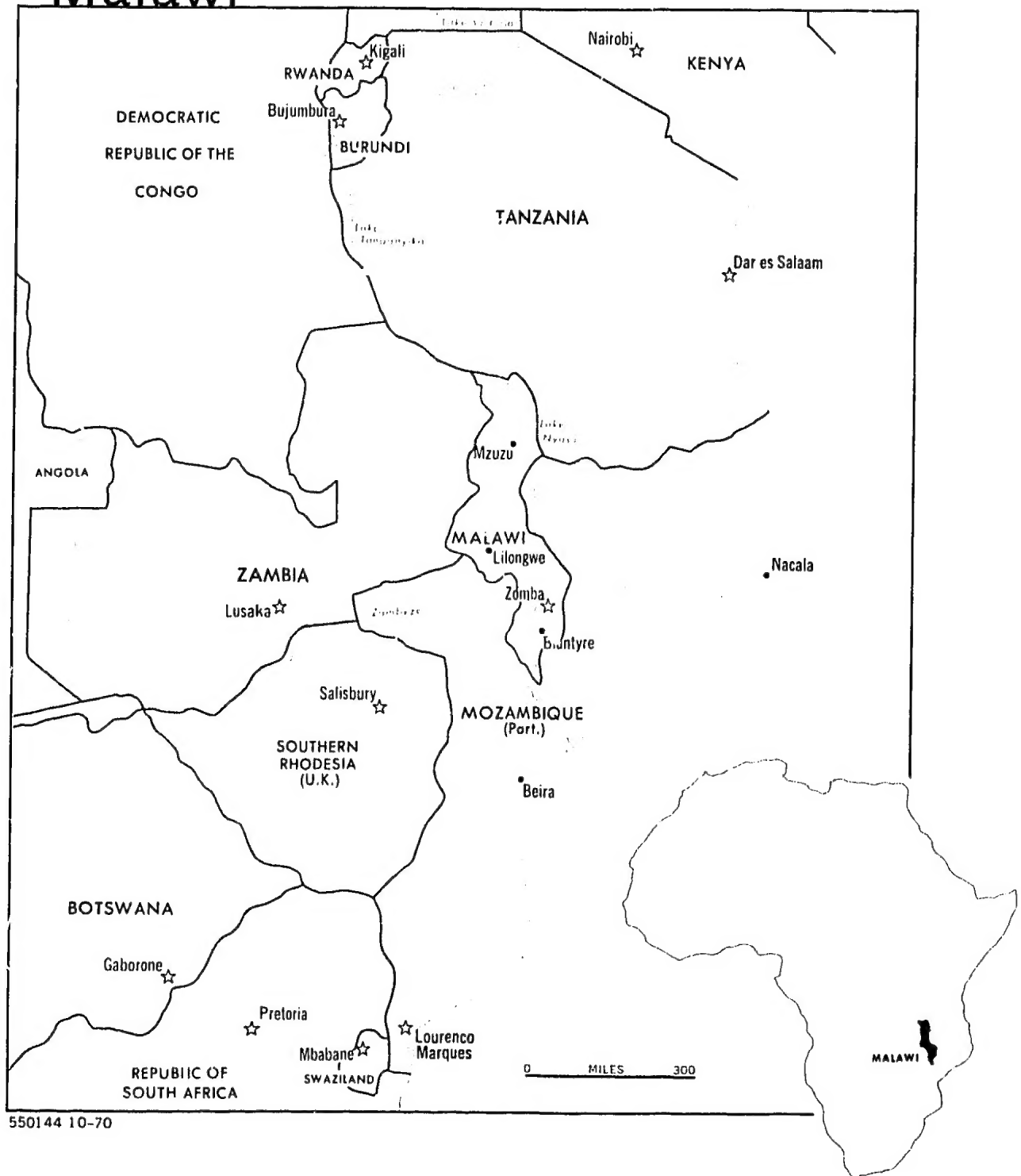
Trade with South Africa will probably decline in the future, however. Malawi has doubled its imports from South Africa since signing a bilateral trade agreement in 1967 (to approximately 15 percent of total imports in 1969), but the bulk of this increase is related to Pretoria's financial assistance and is therefore a temporary phenomenon.

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Portuguese Mozambique: Vital Economic Lifeline

Good relations with Portuguese Mozambique are a matter of economic survival because all imports and exports are transported via the Beira and Nacala rail lines. Since independence, Banda has avoided doing anything that would provoke the Portuguese into closing these lines. Additionally, he has forbidden nationalists of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), who operate principally out of Tanzania, to stage armed raids into Mozambique from Malawi or even to transport arms through his country. As a result, FRELIMO has been forced to keep its armed activity in Malawi to a minimum, although the guerrillas often use remote border regions for refuge and staging bases. Because of these unauthorized activities, Blantyre has generally acquiesced to recurring but minor border violations by Portuguese counterinsurgency patrols.

As in the case of South Africa, Portuguese cooperation extends into several areas. In early 1970, Lisbon agreed to its first major loan of \$6 million for a new highway. Portugal has also given Malawi two boats and has trained seamen for patrolling Lake Nyasa. Both regular and informal contacts are maintained by administrative, military, and security officials on both sides of the border. The interest of the Portuguese in supporting Banda's continued rule became evident in 1967, when they allegedly offered military assistance to help him defeat an abortive uprising.

Rhodesia: Mecca for Malawian Labor

Malawi's relations with Rhodesia are primarily economic. An estimated 155,000 Malawians are employed each year in Rhodesia, and the wages they bring home contribute a substantial amount of foreign exchange. In addition,

Malawi has good trade connections with the Ian Smith regime; in 1969, about 17 percent of Malawi's imports came from Rhodesia. Nevertheless, Banda does not condone "sanction-busting" activities within his country, primarily because he does not want to aggravate his relations with the UK. The sanctions against Rhodesia have actually benefited Malawi, by driving up the price of tobacco, its major cash crop.

In the political field, Malawi has resisted Rhodesian overtures to establish diplomatic or consular relations, or alternatively to accept a resident Rhodesian representative. Malawi maintains an official representative in Salisbury, however, as a liaison between the Rhodesian Government and Malawian laborers.

A Cold Shoulder from Black Africa

Malawi's open cooperation with its white neighbors has strained its relations with most other black African countries. Although nominally remaining a member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Malawi's contacts with this organization and most of its member states have gradually lessened. Banda refuses to support the African Liberation Committee* of the OAU and since 1965 he has boycotted the annual OAU summit conferences by scheduling a national party convention for the same time. When Malawian delegations do attend OAU ministerial meetings, they usually abstain or express reservations on southern African issues.

Banda's public statements have been almost as big an obstacle to better relations with black Africa as his policies have been. Indeed, he sometimes seems to take perverse pleasure in making sarcastic remarks about the "idle childish threats" of the OAU and in expressing his contempt for

*The African Liberation Committee, set up in 1963 to channel funds to the liberation movements, has received little support from the black African states. In 1968-69 it received only some \$0.6 million of its budget of \$1.9 million, because only five states paid their full assessments, and 20 paid nothing at all.

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the idea that combined black African forces could prevail against South Africa and Rhodesia.

Black African attitudes toward white southern Africa cover a broad spectrum and a number of states have come to share some of Banda's views. Rulers of Ivory Coast, Gabon, and Madagascar speak privately of South Africa as a possible source of aid and as a bulwark against the spread of Communism in Africa. Prime Minister Busia of Ghana has stated publicly that the door for dialogue with South Africa should be left open. These and other black states maintain unpublicized trade with southern Africa.

Zambia and Tanzania: Banda's Militant Neighbors

Malawi's policies have been criticized most severely by neighboring Zambia and Tanzania. Blantyre has never had diplomatic relations with Dar es Salaam and only recently established them with Lusaka. Both Zambian President Kaunda and Tanzanian President Nyerere bitterly resent Banda's embrace of the white redoubt. They have sharply criticized him for refusing to assist in the liberation struggle, for going far beyond what is necessary for economic survival, for grossly overestimating his ability to influence the white regimes, and for giving verbal support to black Africa's enemies.

Since 1964 when several dissident ministers fled Malawi for Tanzania and Zambia, Banda has suspected both governments of giving support as well as refuge to his opponents. Both governments did in fact grant Malawian dissidents political asylum, and Tanzania also supplied them with limited arms and training from 1964-67. Although neither country now gives the dissidents any assistance, Banda remains suspicious, especially of Tanzania.

In 1969, however, Malawi initiated the latest of several attempts to improve relations with its black neighbors. Bilateral negotiations were held with Tanzania in May and July, the occasion for the latter's first ministerial-level visit to Malawi

since 1964. Although little progress was made at the talks, both countries agreed to refrain from publicly attacking each other. In an unusual address the following September, Banda emphasized his desire to improve relations with neighboring black states. Shortly thereafter, he attempted to demonstrate his "bridge-building" role by interceding with the Portuguese for the release of several Zambians held prisoner in Mozambique.

The South African prime minister's visit last May seems to have offered only a temporary setback to Malawi's efforts to establish better relations with its black African neighbors. The government-controlled press in Zambia and Tanzania once again took up the cudgels, pointing to Vorster's visit as further proof of Banda's collaboration with the white regimes, but it soon lapsed into silence. And in mid-September, Zambia and Malawi finally established diplomatic relations.

After Banda, What?

As long as President Banda remains on the scene, Malawi will almost certainly follow its present policies. Banda will continue to argue that dialogue and contacts with the white governments are the most realistic means of eradicating racial discrimination in southern Africa, and that the insurgent movements are doomed to remain ineffective for the foreseeable future. Blantyre will probably maintain its present level of relations with Rhodesia and Mozambique. Relations with South Africa may expand, at least over the short run, in view of Pretoria's willingness to fund Banda's costly new capital. Nevertheless, this is unlikely to undercut seriously Malawi's freedom of action, and Banda in the final analysis will continue to be his own man.

Banda will also continue his efforts to improve relations with other black African states. Barring a modification of the white governments' racial policies or of black Africa's animosity toward the white regimes, however, his aspiration to an international role as the "bridge-builder of Africa" seems likely to remain only a dream.

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The future of Malawi's foreign policy largely depends on the continuing leadership of Banda himself, however. The able President is at least 64 and may be several years older. The next generation of Malawian leadership will probably be more in tune with black Africa and less zealous in maintaining ties with the white states. Par-

ticularly, Malawi's considerable reliance on South Africa for economic and technical assistance might be sharply reduced after Banda departs. Nevertheless, any future Malawian government will face the same limitations and realities that are now imposed on it by geography and economic necessity.

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